

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW #438-2

with

Paul Tognetti (PT)

February 19, 1992

Waikiki, Oahu

BY: Joe Rossi (JR)

JR: This is the continuation of an interview with Paul Tognetti, conducted February 19, 1992, at the Elks Club in Waikiki. The interviewer is Joe Rossi.

PT: With the police department as traffic investigator, we'd be called to the scene. We'd have certain areas to cover every month and then we'd change beats. And you'd either be here in the city or out in the country. We'd patrol for eight hours a day, and then when there were accidents, why, we'd be called on our two-way radio and we'd appear at the scene—investigate, find out who was at fault, and many times issue citations. Not like the no-fault insurance program we have today, where it's basically insurance companies that settle accidents. In our day, we'd find out from the statements that the drivers would issue, and then we'd decide who was to blame.

JR: And you'd decide right then and there or in court?

PT: No, we'd decide right there and then. "Look, you did this. This is wrong. This is why you had the accident. I'm going to give you a citation." And of course, then they can go to court and etcetera. But we would make our decision right there at the scene of the accident.

JR: Would there be a penalty in addition to the damage?

PT: Yes, when we go to court. If they were at fault, then yes, there's a penalty that they would pay. And then the insurance companies would pick up on that, on the report of the investigation, and kind of follow through. "Look, you're [*not*] at fault, so the other guy's insurance is going to take care of you," according to the report.

JR: Was there a lot of traffic back then?

PT: I would say there was. It seemed to me every day we had an accident. (Chuckles) When we went through without an accident, it was something.

Whew, no report today. And you made your reports not during the time of the eight hours. Reports were made after your tour of duty. So sometimes you're down at the office there a couple hours after work writing up your reports. Of course, there are times in different areas we could take time off and do our reporting on the beat. But most of the times—accident prevention, we were supposed to have been seen out on the highway as part of the prevention. "There's a white car. Look." People look at a white car, accident prevention. Maybe they can think a little bit more about driving down the roadway. We should've always been seen on the highway.

JR: Were there certain areas that were more likely to have accidents than others?

PT: I would say the accidents in town—probably more accidents in town. But there are more minor accidents. In the country, you'd have your fatal accidents, with the high speeds. And the area between Honolulu and Schofield Barracks, Kipapa Gulch, lot of accidents in that area. And these guys had to return to their base at a certain hour—speeders. We'd be up on top of a hill and we'd watch these guys, we'd prime for 'em. And I mean, they sailed through there sixty, seventy miles an hour. And then we'd have to catch them before they got to the base. (Laughs)

JR: Once they're on base . . .

PT: Once they're on base, then . . .

JR: (Laughs) . . . they're home free.

PT: They're home free. They take over—military. And as far as civil authority, why, we had no grounds.

JR: Now, at that time, there was the blackout. The headlights were blacked out.

PT: Yes.

JR: Did that create special problems?

PT: Yeah, a lot more accidents. They had a shield over the headlights. A shield and then they had a slit of about two inches wide, half inch high, and that was your light, a little slit. And so at nighttime, it was ten-, fifteen-miles-an-hour speed limit. You just couldn't see. And the rest of the bulb was a kind of a bluish. But it didn't put out much light. So everybody was slow driving after darkness.

JR: There were still accidents even though people were . . .

PT: Oh yes, plenty of accidents at night. Although we never patrolled at night,

highway patrol. There were accidents, but our major accidents were in the daytime. And a lot of off limits in the evenings. For the first part of the war, we were restricted from the highways. Right at the beginning of the war, six o'clock everybody had to be off the road. Nobody, really. You had to have a pass to be on the highway.

JR: In a car?

PT: In a car. Yes, there were restrictions. And as the war went on, the restrictions were eased a little bit and it got better. But a lot of restrictions for the civilians. Major thing for restrictions was to control the population—control the Japanese, etcetera—in the event of any outbreaks of war or anything of that nature, to have the population under control.

JR: Now, as a police officer, were you less affected by some of these restrictions? Did you have more leniency in some areas?

PT: We had a little bit more leniency. Anybody that wore a badge had a little more lenience. After hours we'd do a certain amount of sneaking around the streets to get to a certain place. We'd hide behind trees. Of course, we acted like civilians. We wore civilian clothes, and if we had to draw out our badge, we would draw it out. But normally we were supposed to have operated just as any normal civilian, to follow the law. But yes, we abused the law once in a while, to meet a group at a certain place and play poker or something like that, to pass the time away.

JR: Last time you mentioned playing poker. What kind of social activities were going on back then for a single guy like yourself?

PT: Nothing really. Parties. Parties during weekends, and this all happened to be in daylight. Luaus [lu`aus] in the country. Friends of the police department would go to luaus [lu`aus] and have a good time. But always activities would be in the daytime, not in the evenings. And as the restrictions were eased after two or three years, then we got in some little bit of nightlife—up to ten o'clock or something like that. But not too much activity, really. We'd have our own little activity in the Tusitala Court. We'd put up a volleyball net and play volleyball. Have our contests that way, activity. We were pretty much restricted.

JR: And you were playing sports, too, during the war, weren't you?

PT: Yeah, I joined the Healani football team, owned by Scotty Schuman, the Schuman General Motors distributor. Neal Blaisdell was the coach. And of course, he was coaching at St. Louis High School. And he was public relation top man in Dole's. And we played for \$100 a game. There was a league here, semi-pro league. The air force had a team. Healani was our team. I think there were four or five teams here.

JR: One hundred dollars a game, what do you mean by that?

PT: Hmm?

JR: Was the \$100 divided amongst the team?

PT: No, each member got about a hundred bucks a game.

JR: That's pretty good.

PT: Yeah, it was better than doing nothing.

JR: Now, you had played for San Jose State [*University*]. What was the caliber of football like [*in Honolulu*]?

PT: Well, with the Healani's, of course, they were all mostly graduate students. I'd say it was every bit equal to any good college team. We all had a certain amount of experience. And so it was pretty good caliber football. And a lot of local boys were on the team. It was good football.

JR: Where were the games played?

PT: At the old Honolulu Stadium, King Street. At that time, it was about 15,000 [*seat*] capacity. Wooden stadium, termite eaten. (Laughs) But the field was okay, grass field. Heavy rains---I played in football [*games*] with twelve inches of water on the field. You kick the football, I mean, it would plop right down in the water. But it would just be a mud game, and it was equal for everybody and you played it.

JR: Was there a season?

PT: Yeah. The football season—basically in the summer, summer months. And it went into the fall, and that's when we got into the rains.

JR: What was Neal Blaisdell like? What kind of a guy was he?

PT: Neal? Very, very friendly person. Part-Hawaiian and very friendly, easy to get along with. He was, of course, a star in his own days. I think all sports. I guess he must have been a good baseball player, because he played for the [*Baltimore Orioles*]. And football, I'm not too sure. But they always put out good teams for St. Louis High School, very competitive every season. And he didn't believe in hard workouts. Go through some of the plays—I mean, enjoy the game, really, just for fun. In our league, anyway. High school might have been a little bit different. But it seems to me he was a very easygoing coach. It was just a sport, secondary thing. Main thing, get your education for your future. Just go out and have fun.

JR: How did the team do?

PT: And the teams did well. Yeah, basically. They all liked to play for him. He was good.

JR: Was he involved in any political stuff back then?

PT: Oh, yes. He became mayor of the city of Honolulu for [*five*] terms. Very popular person. The Blaisdell family, of course, they're very popular in Hawai'i and Honolulu. His father, I think, was the chief of the fire department. [*Blaisdell's father was an assistant fire chief for the Honolulu Fire Department; his brother William became fire chief of Honolulu.*]

And in the police force, we had a lot of reserves. There was a reserve group. The regular police officers, and then you had a group of reserves. Anyone that was interested in becoming a reserve, was interested in police work, signed up and they would join the regular police officers on duty in the evenings. So it was almost like a double force, the regular police force and the reserves, and there were almost that many reserves as regular police officers. They like kind of doubled the entire police force. And they wore khakis instead of the OD [*olive drab*] uniforms that the police department had, to differentiate a reserve from the regular police force.

JR: What were the uniforms of the police, the regular police force?

PT: Olive drab. Very heavy wool . . .

(Laughter)

PT: . . . for Hawai'i uniforms. And the reserves had the regular GI khakis, and they were lightweight, they were all right. We wore the heavy wool uniforms.

JR: Did they launder that for you or did you have to do it yourself?

PT: No, we took care of our own laundry. And they had to be cleaned and pressed weekly.

JR: Did you remain friendly with Blaisdell after?

PT: Yes, yeah. He was on a . . . I understand he just had a heart attack and died. I don't think he was really anywhere. [*Blaisdell actually suffered a brain hemorrhage while gardening.*] The whole community was in shock. He was seventy-two years of age, but in good health. My father-in-law was very good friends of Blaisdell, being with Dole's cannery. And they always played their card game down there. Cards and dominos, I guess they call it. Big battles.

JR: Your father-in-law, who was that?

PT: Wilkinson.

JR: What was his first name?

PT: James Wilkinson. He was in charge of the double seamer department, putting the lid on the cans. And so it was kind of the. . . . I mean, it was very delicate equipment. If things weren't going right, you just didn't seal the can properly, you'd have a bunch of leaks. You run the company to the ground real fast. So that equipment had to be in first-class shape. And he knew double seaming very well for years. So he had a very important job there, putting the lids on these cans.

But pineapple was the big thing in those days. Sugar was a big thing. Today, I just heard a radio broadcast yesterday, they're talking about eliminating pineapple on the island of Lana`i and going to the tourist industry. It's more prosperous. I think this is the time to go over and buy. I understand, things are still reasonable over there. Five years from now, it will be out of sight. We're taking a trip over there this year. I hear they're selling brand-new homes for \$100,000. Whether they're up on the hill somewhere—it's hard to believe they'd be down on the beach at that price. But I think that's a good investment, to go to Lana`i and buy a piece of property now. If it's available. I mean, sure, maybe it's all leasehold. You know, it's owned by Dole basically. Probably leasehold. But even that. See, like it is over here, you have leasehold property and after thirty or forty years, they'd have to sell in order to stay within the tax structure. Bishop [*Estate*] is selling. We bought our lot in Niu Valley fifteen years ago. Half of the valley sold for a dollar a square foot, we paid three dollars a square foot. Today it's worth thirty or forty dollars a square foot. So go to Lana`i. Now is the time.

JR: (Chuckles) This is your advice to me.

PT: That's the time to buy. Right now, that's kind of like new pioneer country opening up.

JR: You mentioned Schuman also. Did you have much contact with him?

PT: Not too much with [*Gustave*] "Scotty" Schuman. But he was apparently a good gentleman to deal with. He owned and operated the General Motors dealership for years. They were down there where the palace grounds are [*at the corner of Beretania and Richards streets*]. They had a dealership right there, real ancient building. They knocked it down [*in the sixties*], then they moved down to Beretania Street.

JR: You didn't stay with the police force for the whole duration of the war.

PT: No, just till fifteenth of July in '44. Got out [*of the military*], just to the day, fifteenth of July in '46.

JR: So were you drafted?

PT: Yes, drafted.

JR: Could you have stayed on the force?

PT: No. At that point, nobody—when they had the invasion in Europe, no personnel were deferred, at least from the police department. When the time came up and your number came up, you had to go. I think there were very few industries where you would be deferred. Possibly teachers or 4-Fs, some ailment that they didn't want you. But pretty much, if you were healthy, they'd draft you 100 percent into the armed forces. Thanks gosh for today, we've got kind of a professional armed forces. They don't need drafts. Person who's not interested in the military doesn't have to go. I think it looks like it's the thing to be, to have a professional armed forces where you join it and get paid for it. And it's very technical equipment that you have nowadays, and you've got to be trained for it. I think the days of the infantry are gone. This last war we had with Iraq, the air force basically won that war.

JR: What was your feelings about getting into the military at that time?

PT: Well, I guess one has kind of mixed emotions. But you felt like, I guess, there was a reason for having this war, World War II. [*Adolf*] Hitler and [*Hideki*] Tojo were trying to take over the world, rule the world. And of course, when you're attacked you kind of defend yourself. So there were good reasons to see we got to get these guys and wipe them off the map.

But then you get into the actual war, like on Okinawa, and you begin to think, what are we doing over here? Us, just a small force, getting killed off, for what reason? It seemed to me, it's politics, and the leaders are the ones that should be punished, right from the beginning. They start these wars and make the decisions, and wars are not a benefit to anybody. They're costly and expensive and everybody loses. And so it seemed to me, you just got to go after the leaders. They're the ones that get you involved, make their decisions.

And I think more and more, we're going to have less wars. We've had a lot of small skirmishes, with less big wars, because I think people are getting educated to wars. Really, it's just destruction on all sides. What benefits are there? We won the war in (chuckles) Iraq. Did we win the war? [*Saddam*] Hussein is still leading his country over there. I guess we got all the oil we want for the time being. For how long, I don't know, depending on a few years down the road.

But all in all, I think that wars are no solution to civilization. Meet at the table and argue out your differences. Hell of a lot better. Or have economic wars. They're okay. Like we're having this bashing with Japan right now. It's a hell of a lot better than having a war where you're shooting one another. Sit down, discuss 'em, and here you are, tangling with leaders and leaders of industry, leaders of countries. "All right, you guys battle it out by words, not by guns." And I think this is the way to go, across the table.

And there are reasons why your economies in some countries are better than in others. I think that it still always goes back to good, hard work—good organization, good, hard work. I always believe in the theory of 98 percent perspiration and 2 percent inspiration. That's kind of my view of life—hard work. And you see the people in poverty countries that do hard work. I see the Vietnamese come to our country and they're successful where a lot of us are not successful. But they are successful. They work hard. There's land up there on the North Shore in agriculture. Nobody had a future up there. The Kahuku plantation are looking for people to farm land. They try it. Experts from the West Coast come over for one year, they make their investments. Between the birds and the rain and the winds, they wouldn't succeed. But the Vietnamese are up there, and they're successful. Hard work! They put up their windbreaks, solve the bird problem, solve their wind problem. Lots of good, hard work, and they're successful.

But if one has to serve a short time—like in Switzerland, every citizen has to serve one year. I think that's good. For one year—say a one-year term—serve it. I think you enjoy civilization a lot more once you get into one year of military. Two years that I got into it, all of a sudden, oh, civilian life, what a paradise compared to being in the service.

JR: Did you have any idea that it was going to be . . .

PT: Regimentation, regimentation. Officers are well off, but anybody under officers, you're just a number. No, I didn't like it, even though I was in counterintelligence corps [*CIC*]. On the ship coming back from Korea to West Coast, I saw the treatment of the officers and the unenlisted personnel—terrible. The food, the treatment---in general, officers were first class, and the rest of 'em were second-rate citizens. I didn't like it.

JR: You were on the police force at the time that you got [*drafted*]. What did you get, a notice in the mail or something? How does that work? How do you know that you were drafted?

PT: Yes, you get a notice from the armed forces, federal government.

JR: Where did you have to go?

PT: Well, my draft board was California. And my seven buddies—six of 'em, one



died over here. Five of 'em went back to their draft boards when they got their notice, I believe. They went back to their draft boards. I don't know what happened to my bloody draft board. But then I had this call from a FBI agent. Says, "You're going on the ship in the morning, and if you go on that ship, we'll pick you up in San Francisco. You go into service over here."

JR: Why did they say that?

PT: I don't know. I didn't question it. I heard the words FBI.

(Laughter)

PT: That was enough. I took it to heart and said, "I guess these guys know what they're doing." Who in the hell is going to buck the Federal Bureau of Investigation? But it turned out I got into CIC work, which is part of the same group.

JR: How did that happen? You got to choose that, or they just chose it?

PT: No, with the police background I had—and apparently they were looking for more agents here in Honolulu. So I got involved.

JR: What exactly did they have you do?

PT: CIC, the first three months was to interrogate old Japanese for their loyalty.

JR: In Hawai'i.

PT: In Hawai'i. I used an interpreter, and he asked the questions.

JR: Are these people that were suspected of doing something?

PT: No, not really. I think it was just a routine program. Let 'em know that we still want your loyalty and we want you to tell us that.

JR: Now, this was in '44?

PT: This was in '44, right.

JR: Kind of far into the war.

PT: Well, it was far into the war, but '44—in March of '44 was just at the invasion of Europe. It was really the climax of the whole war. And nobody was deferred and nobody knew, hey, where are we going to go from here? It was really at the climax of the war, World War II. Whether Japan was going to get stronger, things were going to get tougher, it was hard to say.

JR: Where did they have you doing this interrogating?

PT: At the Dillingham Building on Bishop Street. That was the FBI office and the counterintelligence corps office there, Dillingham Building.

JR: Did you have an office, did you have a room?

PT: The counterintelligence corps had their own rooms, yes. And the FBI had their own rooms next door. So we worked in civilian clothes, just like civilians.

JR: Did you go get the people or did someone else bring them to you?

PT: Oh, they brought 'em to us. Apparently, working together with the Federal Bureau of Investigations [*and*] CIC, they came in. They knew they had to come in, report, and be interviewed for loyalty.

JR: Do you remember the kind of questions that they might have been asked?

PT: I really don't remember. But it was pertaining to loyalty. "In the event of an attack, who would you be loyal to, Japan or the United States?" A question of that nature. "We want to know your loyalty. Are you in support of the U.S. government or are you in support of Japan?"

And 100 percent were loyal U.S. citizens. Nobody would say no. "Heavens, if we had an invasion or something, we're not going to shoot Americans."

Just like this friend of mine, Naka. "If the Japanese soldier come on the beach, would you shoot him?"

"I'm an American. Japanese, I shoot him!"

JR: Did the people seem nervous about having to go through this?

PT: No, they didn't. They knew that we're not a bunch of barbarians. Like when we invaded Okinawa, the Okinawans were told a bunch of barbarians were invading the island. "They're going to kill all of you. Go underground for three months. We'll exterminate these barbarians in three months, and then we'll all come out and be at peace." Well, just the opposite turned out. We were peaceful and we liked to get along with people, and we're just after the Japanese armed forces, not the civilians. And we had a military government that took care of civilians.

JR: They had you dress up as a civilian. Why do you think they had you do that?

PT: They didn't want, really, a military person interrogating a civilian. I think they felt more at home if that person was a civilian asking questions to a civilian.

It seemed to me, it kept them much more at ease. If you were a military person, then it was kind of military versus civilian. So we were kind of in the same class.

JR: Do you know any of the other activities that office was doing at that time?

PT: Counterintelligence corps, anything that was detrimental to the armed forces, they would investigate. And there were communists, even in our armed forces. They would raid letters, pick up letters. Some of the armed forces people were really communist. Somehow or other, they said, "Let's check this guy's mail. From his background we think he's a communist." And so they'd read his mail before he'd get it. I mean, they'd open up people's mail. On Okinawa, the same way. And I opened up—I didn't, but the officer did, and they said, "Let's keep an eye on this particular person. He is a communist, and we want to watch him very carefully." I'd have to go in their bag. They would say, "Look, we want to get more letters out of his bag." When he's on tour somewhere, I'd go into his bag and open it up and see if I could find letters that we hadn't uncovered that were detrimental, read 'em and see what they're all about. And then pass it on to the officers in charge. We'd have to do the dirty work and pass it on that way.

JR: So you were doing the interrogation work for, you said, three months?

PT: Here in Honolulu, right.

JR: Then what happened after that?

PT: Then they needed a replacement. CIC becomes part of G2 in the divisions. You have your G2 section—engineers, infantry. There are about four phases of the infantry, the division. So CIC worked under G2, under whoever was in charge. It happened to have been a colonel who was in charge of Seventh Division. So I was with Seventh Division CIC. We had a bunch of agents working for 'em. And our job, basically, was to look for enemy equipment and documents that would help strategy with the armed forces. If we find something that might be beneficial. . . . Or, interrogate anybody we thought was anti-American, which once you get 'em into the service and you're overseas, by that time, you know if he's a loyal U.S. soldier, not a communist or whatever. By that time, you pretty much know that, look, everybody in the armed forces is loyal to America, our armed forces. Seldom you got involved with a negative person overseas. But we were looking for enemy equipment, enemy documents that would help our armed forces. And we didn't find much, except this one Japanese officer we captured. He was in love with an Okinawan nurse.

JR: Where was that?

PT: On Okinawa. We captured the only Japanese officer in the entire Pacific

campaign, it was our detachment. And he was in love with this Okinawan nurse. And he had a lot of enemy blueprints, documents. And we held a wedding at Twenty-fourth Corps for the Japanese soldier and the Okinawan nurse. In the middle of battle, to have a wedding at Twenty-fourth Corps headquarters. General Hodges was our general, and he allowed it. And of course, the troops up in the front lines heard about the wedding. They couldn't believe this was coming out, and they were just very upset and about ready to turn their weapons the other way, shoot on headquarters.

JR: I missed something. Why would they have a wedding? I don't know. Why would the general want to have that wedding?

PT: He wanted to have it because that's what—apparently they made an agreement with this officer. “Now you said you've got a lot of maps, lot of everything, all the stronghold points in the southern part of Okinawa that we could attack. You show us the maps, we know that here's the general's headquarters and here's where they direct all their forces. And you got all this information. All right, you give us all that information and we'll let you have your wedding.” Apparently they made an agreement. And he came out and said, “Look, what this officer gave us saved hundreds of American soldiers lives, and this is why we made a deal with him and that's why we said we'll allow him to have this wedding.”

JR: Okay, I follow you now.

PT: And it was played up in *Time* magazine, all over the country. So it wasn't kept secret, but very unusual to say the least.

JR: Where did your wartime experiences take you? It took you to, you mentioned, Okinawa.

PT: Leyte, the island of Leyte in the Philippines. That was the first island in the return of the Philippines, the island of Leyte. From there, they went into Luzon a little later. But I got down there, just on Leyte, for a few days, and then they said, “We want you to go on board this ship out in the Manila Bay.” And I soon found out there was an invasion force forming for the invasion of Okinawa. And so, really, I went for a short duration to the Philippines and aboard this ship for the invasion of Okinawa.

And I never saw so many ships in all my life. I was looking around Okinawa, I mean, ships, like you see that one ship out there [*Paul Tognetti points to a ship in the distance*], from here to there. And I mean, it was so well organized. They all came in there that morning before invasion. And you look around and all of a sudden, hey, we're not here alone. (Chuckles) Unbelievable force that had all been there, all congregated, and zero hour approached to invade Okinawa.

Of course, we were given literature about terrible things on Okinawa. Snakes and a lot of—mostly snakes. They had a good deal on snakes. We never saw a snake in all our time. They give you the history of it. Let's see, Okinawans are supposed to be second-class Japanese, the workhorse of Japan. Basically, Okinawa is an agriculture base. Their armed forces were well entrenched on the southern half of Okinawa. All underground tunnels, a maze of underground tunnels in the southern half of Okinawa. We cut the island in half. The marines went north with no resistance at all. There was nobody, no armed forces in the northern half of Okinawa. Everything was in the south. So the marines went down on the west coast, and the Seventh Division, Twenty-fourth Corps, went down to the east coast. There were about six divisions—Twenty-fourth Corps, Tenth Army.

And it looked like it was kind of the last resort for Japan. They came in there with their kamikaze planes, where they had one pilot and dynamite and just tried to destroy ships. And on that basis, which they were successful in a few cases, they directed their [*planes*] direct at the ship, with one person piloting the unit. And that was kind of a hari-kari thing. "It's the end of my life, but I'm going to get this load of bomb into the ship." And he guided it in there, until it was knocked out by our aircraft. But that was their kind of final explosion, kamikaze pilots diving into ships. Not very successful. And of course, then Harry Truman, with his atomic bomb on Hiroshima—guess there were two bombs dropped [*i.e., one on Hiroshima, one on Nagasaki*]. And that pretty much brought the end of the war in Japan.

JR: Had you heard anything about these atomic bombs?

PT: No, not a thing, until they were dropped. Even then, we weren't sure. But we knew that, look, campaign is over here, the next assignment would be invade Japan. That would have been a slaughter, I think. I think the atomic bomb saved a lot of American lives.

JR: So were you doing your CIC work throughout this period?

PT: Yes, throughout this period, and then went up to Korea, occupation forces. We did CIC work up there. Worked together very closely with the civilian forces. They had a detachment in the army for civilian programs, and we worked close with them and interviewed a lot of organizations for their political backgrounds. That was basically our job, to interview these various groups, find out what their political aspirations were. And after a few days, there were just a lot of different political groups that want to take over the country. And it was our job to kind of interrogate these groups. Who are they? Why are they forming this group? Why do they want to run this country? And basically, they wanted a peaceful approach to it. And Syngman Rhee was kind of the leader of the country, and he became the first [*South*] Korean president. And he was quite old at the time, too.

JR: I'm going to stop you just for a second.

PT: Okay.

PT: After serving one year of duty in Korea, they wanted people to stay longer. I was tech[nical] sergeant there then, and they offered me a warrant officer's rating, and I didn't accept it. I felt like two years in the service was enough. I didn't like the regimentation really, observing people in the armed forces. There's better ways of life in civilian life than this. And being overseas for five years, I wanted to get home and get back to civilization. So I decided against staying any longer down there. And I guess, not too long after that they had the Korean conflict over there, and I was glad to be out of there. You could see a lot of tensions brewing over there among the Korean forces, north and south. So, came back to Seattle and was up there for a couple of nights and a couple of days, and discharged in California, to the day, two years, July 15, '46.

JR: The day that you . . .

PT: The day that I went into the service. Very happy to get out. Served my time. And once you're out, and you've served, and you come back survived, then those experiences are good experiences. If you play it smart, you can survive. And you could not play it too smart, especially in the infantry. You're going to get killed. But with the training that you receive before you go into the actual battle, seems to me you can pretty well take care of yourself. They tell you what to do. "Don't do this, don't do that." And if you do the right things that they tell you, seems to me a person's got a decent chance of surviving, unless they're direct hits or something. But a lot of our people die, I think, from lack of following through with their training program, carelessness.

But being an infantryman, I think that's the tough job in war. Kill or be killed. Watching those soldiers walk up to the front lines, determination on their faces, facing death as you march up. And some of these fellows are all on the point system. I think 140 points, you go back home. You're taken out of the actual fighting military, from line duty. And some of these guys would go up there with 137 points, two or three more points to go. Had to serve another week or two, and you might be killed. And you could see it on their faces. "Man, I hope I survive this week." Well, it's a tough business. So wars in general, they're a thing of the past, it seems to me. There are a lot of other

ways to solve problems in this world besides going to war—negotiations.

JR: You got up to Seattle, then did you come back to Hawaii? Did you stay on the Mainland?

PT: I stayed on the Mainland for about a month with my folks. And then had my girlfriend in Hawai`i, came back over here, and married into the Wilkinson family.

JR: How did you meet her, if I may ask?

PT: Her brother was on the football team that I had, this little Pop Warner football team that I trained here during the police period.

JR: You were coaching?

PT: I was coaching them. And her brother happened to have been on the team, so he invited me home for dinner one evening and that started a romance. I liked his sister. And like he said, "I don't want you to come up to my home so I can play football, that's not it. Come up anyway and have dinner with us." He had a good-looking sister.

(Laughter)

JR: Can I just ask a question about the coaching? Was this a children's league?

PT: Children's league. Ten to twelve years of age. Youngsters. About a dozen of 'em, just enough for a football team. And they kind of got the word out, "Look, there's a guy over here, wants to get a team together." Most of them were *Haole*. There were a few mixed kids from this area, Waikiki area. And we had a lot of fun together.

JR: Where did you practice?

PT: We practiced right here at the Elks. The old house that the Elks Club had was an old home, built, it seemed to me, way back in the missionary time. A real old house. Had a cellar downstairs, and it had a little area we could put our uniforms in there. And we used their front lawn as part of the practice field. It was big enough, we can pass and run and run plays. So it worked out all right.

JR: Were there games with other teams in other areas?

PT: Yeah, in different areas in the city. There were four or five teams that we played. So there was a little bit of a competition. Kids could get involved in sports. And Blaisdell at that time got us to play a pre-game at one of their big games. To play in the Honolulu Stadium for a ten-, twelve-year-old youngster

must have been something. And we enjoyed it.

JR: What kind of a coach were you?

PT: Basically, it's just to get the kids together, good friendship. No, I wasn't a sturdy coach. They had to know their plays, run through their plays. But I never called the plays. They did everything themselves, basically. Today, it's kind of more like a machine. The coach calls all the plays from the sidelines. In the old days, why, the kids call the plays. They were on the field, and they called their own plays, ran the team themselves. Hopefully, they called the right plays. And they had fun. Nowadays, it's win or else. It's a real professional type of a thing—business. Not a real happy sport activity anymore. It's a whole new ball game.

JR: Were you volunteering your time for that?

PT: Yeah, it was all volunteer work. Time off, be with the kids. And I think it's—especially during the war here, they had to do something. I mean, there was no activities. I don't know what kids did at home besides their schoolwork. And if they're involved in sports, get out play a little basketball. And I think---yeah, I did a little basketball work, too. And I refereed basketball for—they had A league and a B league, and I refereed B league and did some officiating. And it was these youngsters playing. Like the football, we went into basketball. So we had a little basketball league. I worked for them on basketball, too.

JR: So, getting back to your romance.

PT: Well, getting back to my romance. I was on the police force, and a little football, and met Virginia. And she had graduated from Roosevelt High School and got into Bishop Insurance. She was working in the insurance company Downtown as an appraiser. Apparently, knew her work very well. We got married and had our twin girls.

JR: So you came back here, then, and got married. When did you get married?

PT: Got married in '46. And stayed here until '48, went back to California in '48. And then my dad passed away in '50, December of '50. And we were about to have our twin girls, and Virginia said, "Let's go back to Hawai'i."

I says, "Okay." So in '50, we came back to Hawai'i and we had our twin girls and settled here ever since.

JR: That was okay with you, to come back to Hawai'i?

PT: Yeah. I had a good job on the West Coast, assistant general manager—commissions and everything—and I took about a 50 percent cut coming back



to the islands. I really didn't know what I was getting into, but I guess I followed her along. And with the feed and grain business on the West Coast I got into basically the same feed business over here, and been in it ever since. Dealing with farmers—about the best thing I knew, I guess. So it was good to me.

JR: What did you do those couple of years that you were here after you got married in '46, '47?

PT: I worked for Dole's cannery for two years. I was the superintendent, foreman in the cooking department. And working in Dole's cannery—a lot of noisy cans, and hot over the cookers—I got a little tired of that work. An opportunity came up on the West Coast in my hometown, so I decided to go back. And my wife followed me, after the dust settled a bit. At the time, I was wondering if that was going to happen, but my father-in-law says, “Look, you go where your husband goes.” So I guess he instilled her in getting her back to California.

JR: She finally got back here, though.

PT: Yeah, she finally worked her way back over here. I'm glad she did. I fell in love with this place, and I still like it. I'm glad I'm here, [*rather*] than in California. There have been all kinds of opportunities. People want to work here. And real estate, got involved in that a little bit. And I think there are some opportunities over in Lana`i right now, from what I'm hearing a little bit. But I think those will probably be the last opportunities over here in the Hawaiian islands.

JR: Well, we're standing here in Waik\_k\_. It's a little bit different than it was when you came back in '41.

PT: Oh yes. We were on a ship like that one sailing out there, and P-40s and Grumman navy planes were diving on the ship. I said, “Man, this is some fortress of the Pacific.” Three days before Pearl Harbor I thought we had all our defenses raring to go. Come December the seventh, such a beautiful sneak attack. I think the only planes that got up in the air were some P-40 planes down in Hale`iwa. They had a strip down there, and about a half-a-dozen planes got up. I think those were the only planes that we had in the air that day. They caught all our planes at Hickam base and Kane`ohe base. They knocked them all out. They attacked all of our air bases—all military installations, basically. And they did a good job of it. And I think they really didn't know what they did, or they should have come back here, invaded. And I heard later that, yes, their review of their attack, something went wrong. The pictures weren't clear enough or someone didn't study them well enough. They could have come back and taken these islands three or four months later without any problem.

Then their armed forces combined an attack on Midway Island in June of that year [1942]. But apparently it was too late. We were well fortified here. And I remember planes leaving this island all day in June to attack the Japanese fleet coming to Midway. And they knocked out about three of their carriers in the Midway attack and really set 'em back. If they had taken Midway, then they would have probably hopped over on these islands. But it was too late. They should've attacked these islands, came back. And they could have taken them thirty, sixty days later without any problems 'cause we were crippled badly.

JR: Did it feel that way?

PT: Yes, it felt that way. But at the same time, I kind of figured maybe they'll just bypass Hawai'i and go to the West Coast. (Laughs) No, somehow or other I felt if there wasn't an invasion—of course, the first few weeks there was talk there was an invasion going on here. But it was all rumors. And more and more, "I guess they haven't attacked these islands." And every day went by, we felt safer.

JR: You know, you've got quite a story there with your Pearl Harbor experiences. How often do you find yourself talking about that day?

PT: Not too much, unless a special—come December the seventh, or twenty-five years or fifty-year experiences, and people [say], "Hey, you were here, and we want to talk to you about your experiences and what happened then." People are very inquisitive and want to know. There is a book out there at Pearl Harbor I got to go pick up. I saw it up in San Jose. One of the players had it. And there was quite a write up about the team, pictures and all. *Day of Infamy* talks about myself, and then there's another book, and there are several pages in there about the whole team. They say it's on sale out there at Pearl Harbor, at the bookstore there.

JR: I appreciate you telling it one more time for me, for my sake.

PT: Well, I enjoyed it very much. If people want to hear about the experiences, I enjoy talking about 'em. It's hard to believe that there are so few people around, really, that were here at that time. You'd think there would be a lot of people, but I guess local people—well, I guess there are a few, but not too many. Either they've left the island, or fifty years ago is fifty years and they're not around anymore. No, I've enjoyed life out here and it's a beautiful place. Beautiful place to raise a family.

JR: Thanks a lot.

PT: Yeah, a pleasure. Thank you for the interview.

END OF INTERVIEW